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THE PILGRIMAGE AND CIVILIZATION OF THE TOLTECS.

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DAVID CERNA, M. D., PH. D.

Demonstrator of Physiology and Lecturer on the History of Medicine in the Medical
Department of the University of Texas.



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I need not state, perhaps, that of the three principal branches of the historical human races, the Hamitic, the Semitic, and the Aryan or Indo-European, this last one has always been considered as the most important in every respect. From it, undoubtedly, have sprung the peoples that have more largely contributed to the progress and development of civilization. The Semitic branch is especiallly noted for having given to the world three religions, each one of which proclaims, singularly enough, the existence of One, All-Powerful God, Ruler of the Universe: the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and the Christian. The Hamitic branch comprises chiefly the venerable Egyptians and the Chaldeans. To another Eastern nation the world is indebted for modern civilization, although not generally admitted, but nevertheless true. I mean, of course, China.

Regarding the contributors to modern human progress we shall not, nay, we can not stop here. We shall find, if we carefully consult and examine the annals of human existence, that two other peoples have also contributed to the common stock of civilization, and that these two peoples belong to our own Continent. As you may surmise, I have reference to the Peruvians and the Mexicans; especially to these latter tribes that once inhabited and held full sway over beautiful *Anahuac*: tribes to which belonged Netzahualcoyotl, the king-poet, and the poet-king of our primitive Continental literature; Guatimotzin the Aztec Philopœmen, the last and heroic martyr of his race, and a host of other brilliant stars that shall forever shine in the firmament of our own history.

There is no doubt that all these Mexican tribes contributed more or less to the establishment of the great Aztec Empire and to the origin and development of a wonderful civilization.

Whether all these ancient peoples had or not a common origin; whether they were aborgines or had sprung from Eastern nations, a topic in itself extremely interesting from a historical and scientific point of view, the matter remains unsettled, notwithstanding the many beautiful theories promulgated on both sides of the question.

It has been maintained that the Mayas and the Maya-Quiches, the races peculiar to Yucatan and Chiapas, perhaps the most ancient of American peoples, proceeded either directly or indirectly from Egypt and other Eastern nations, their appearance on this Continent being accounted for in different ways, but without the light of positive proof.

Be this as it may, these tribes differed in many respects from the rest



of the Anahuac races. Without entering, then, into a discussion of problematical questions, permit me to relate briefly the story of these latter people, especially, for the present at least, that of the remarkable Toltecs, considered as the most ancient of the civilized Mexican nations.

History tells us that the Toltecs were among the first of the ambulant tribes to traverse the country and penetrate the beautiful and picturesque land of *Anahuac*. Other tribes followed, or preceded them, such as the *Chichimecs*, the *Colhuas*, the *Acolhuas*, the *Tlaxcaltecs*, the *Chiapanecs*, the *Zapotecs*, the *Olmechs*, the *Huastecs*, the *Otomies*, the *Tarascs*, the *Matlazincs*, and others, the principal one of all these being that which formed, in the course of time, the most famous and powerful Empire of this Continent, and which, as you well know, succumbed finally to the Spanish Conquest. I refer to the Aztecs or true *Mexicans*.

The Toltecs lived within the limits of the territory situated on the northern part of the country, in a city founded, built and called by them *Tlapallam* or *Huehuetlapallam* of the *Tollan* kingdom. Their chief occupation had been the tilling of the land and the working of metals. They were especially advanced in agriculture.

The Toltecs, in this seclusion, lived many years of prosperity in Huehuetlapallam and other neighboring towns, but as the demands of their ever increasing population became greater and greater, they resolved to remove farther on towards the South.

After wandering hither and thither for several years, and having met with various experiences, they came across a better country where they resolved to settle, founding towards the year 552 the city of *Tlapallanconco* or the *small Tlapallam*. Engaged in their favorite occupation, agriculture, that afforded them the principal means of support, the Toltecs continued to live in their new abode for a period of three years, at the end of which, under pressing circumstances, and especially through the advice of their wise and honored prophet *Huemac* or *Huematzin*, they again proceeded on their southern journey in their eager desire of finding the promised land.*

According to *Huematzin* (the word signifying "big hands," and also figuratively "intelligent, wise and powerful"), their chief adviser, the existence near by of a fierce and warlike tribe, the *Chichimecs*, was a hindrance to their peace and prosperity. Besides, the future greatness of the Toltec family was to be found in a land situated farther on, where they could reign supreme and give rise to a happy and prosperous nation.

Thus stimulated by the hopeful and eloquent words of the great *Huematzin*, the intelligent Indians, during the year 555, again abandoned

* It may be of interest to learn that the Toltecs, at the beginning of their long pilgrimage, made vows of chastity, vows which were to hold good for a period of twenty-three years. The object of such step can be clearly understood, and it is said that they faithfully kept their pledged word.

their last homestead, and, after a twelve-day journey, they arrived at a place named *Hueyralan*, or better still *Hueixallan* (near the sandy place), where a stay of four years was decided upon.

In the course of time, and a little farther on, they established themselves in the beautiful plains of *Xalisco*. There, under an excellent climate, and highly pleased with the exuberant fertility of the surrounding country, they lived and prospered for a period of eight years. A city was built, and as a result of their incessant labors, the land was yearly covered with numerous and abundant crops consisting especially of corn or maize, cotton, beans, and pepper.

Again continuing their pilgrimage, the Toltecs arrived, in 567, at a place called *Chilmalhuacan* where they settled for a period of five years.

From Chilmalhuacan (the word signifying "a place where reside the owners of the '*chimalli*'" or shields) the Toltecs proceeded, in 572, to *Tochpan* or *Tuxpan*; thence respectively to *Quiahuiztlan* or *Quiyahuiztlan*, and *Zacatlan*. Other places were successively visited and occupied for short periods of time, such as *Totzapan*, *Tepetla*, *Mazapec*, *Xiuhcoac*, and *Iztachuexolla*.

In 645 they arrived at *Tollantzinco*. The Toltecs were still under the guidance of the great Huehuematzin and seven other Indian chiefs: *Zacatl*, *Chalcatzin*, *Tzihuacuatl*, *Metzotzin*, *Checatzin*, *Tlapalmetzotzin*, and *Cxhuatzon*.

Tollantzinco was a beautiful and fertile country, situated about fifty miles north of the future capital of the Mexican Empire, that is, the present City of Mexico. The country offered the best advantages, and the Toltecs, ever eager to improve their condition, resolved to make of the new place their home. They did so for a period of sixteen years, during which peace, happiness, and prosperity crowned all their efforts.

But the venerable Huehuematzin, who never abandoned the tribe that was to become the originator of a great civilization, with his continued counsel once more induced the wandering Indians to remove to another and better place, and finally in 661 the Toltecs arrived at Tollan or Tula, which was decided upon to be the termination of their long pilgrimage.

Although the exact point from which the Toltecs originally started in their wanderings is shrouded in speculation if not mystery, there is no doubt that the itinerary followed by them in their southern journey, as referred to by the Indian historian, *IXTLILXOCHITL*, is exact in some respects, if *not* in all. While the situation of Tlapallam or Huehuetlapallam, on the north, is doubtful, there remain Xalisco in the modern State of Xalisco, or Jalisco, as it is called at present, in Mexico. There is Tochpan or Tuxpan now in the State of Michoacan, and again in the State of Vera Cruz, where is also known to have existed Quiahuiztlan. In the State of Puebla there is the town of Zacatlan, while Huexutla,

Tollantzinco, and Tollan or Tula can at present be examined in the State of Hidalgo.

The starting point of the Toltecs in their pilgrimage is summarily treated by EUSTAQUIO BUELNA* in a recent study. This writer traces such a point as far north as the territories traversed by the Colorado and Gila rivers, an opinion entertained by other ancient and modern writers. He believes that the tribes in their wanderings must have passed by the *Tulare* lake found between the modern cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, in Upper California. Singularly enough the same name *Tulare* is still retained by a small town, in the county which also bears the same appellation, in that State. Nay, could not these wonderful people have come from farther north? I find that in the State of Nevada, in Elko county, on the northeastern portion, there is a little town called *Tulasco*. Be this as it may, again, in New Mexico, we come across with another place that bears the name of *Tularosa*.

All these terms have in common the prefix *tula*, which is neither of English nor Spanish origin. *Tula* is a *nahoac* or Toltec term, and comes from *tollin*, or *tule*, a name applied to a marshy plant, presumably abundant in the neighborhood of the first Tollan or Tula. The plant here referred to is not found about the Mexican Tula, and it is but fair to infer that the modern city derived its name from the ancient town.

Traveling South, then, the Toltecs must have arrived at the confluence or thereabouts of the two rivers mentioned, the Colorado and the Gila. Now, the word Gila is undoubtedly derived from *Xilla*, itself composed of *xilotl*, which drops the particle *otl* and takes that of *tla* or *la*, meaning "a country abundant in green corn." Once more, it may be inferred that somewhere in this vicinity the first Huehuetlapallam or Tlapallam must have been built, from the fact that this last term, *tlapallam*, signifies in the Toltec language "a place near the red soil."

The character of the ruins of ancient towns, discovered later in the regions just alluded to, points strongly to the probability of said towns having been the work of cultured races, and *not* of the numerous North American Indian tribes which have never shown any tendency to progress or civilization.

In the course of years, of centuries perhaps, the Toltecs in their passage from Gila to Anahuac must have followed a route by way of Sonora and Sinaloa, along the coast, until they reached the high tablelands of Mexico, founding the city of Tula first and of Texcoco afterwards.

Tula or Tollan, situated about forty miles north of the actual Capital of the Republic, and almost perfect as regards the excellency of the climate and the fertility of the soil, was looked upon by the Toltec family as their promised land. Indeed, Tula was the realization of their

* *Peregrinacion de los Aztecas*, Mexico, 1887.

happiest dreams. It seemed as if their desires, their hopes, and their ambitions were to be fulfilled; as if the gods, moved by the trials and tribulations of their children, tribulations and trials patiently endured for a period of over one hundred years of a wandering life, and as a reward for their perseverance, the gods, in lieu of all this, had at last answered their summons, opening to them a new but permanent field upon which to lavish their greatest energies for their own and for the good of future generations! The die was cast, and the Toltecs, elated at their promising prospects, resolved to settle definitely in the newly found land.

But the Toltecs were not, as some historians suppose, the sole founders of the new city and the other towns that afterward submitted to their rule. Other tribes were in possession of the land on the arrival of the new comers. The new capital, Tula, in fact had been the home of the Otomies, and was called by these *Mamemhi*. It may be said, therefore, that Tula is the most ancient city spoken of in the annals of beautiful Anahuac, and the Toltecs the first *historical* race of Mexico.

Once definitely established, the Toltecs converted Tula into the metropolis of the nation and the abode of future able rulers. The shrewd and intelligent Indians, after proper deliberations, and bearing in mind the absolute necessity of creating a common power to regulate and conduct their affairs on the one hand, and, on the other, to promote the welfare of the nation, which may be looked upon as the natural tendencies of a progressive and enlightened people, assumed a monarchical form of government.

The newly formed monarchy began to exercise its power in the year 667. The Toltecs elected *Chalchiutlotonac*, or *Chalchiuhtlanetzin*, as their first king. Under this monarch, naturally of a humane and just, and, at the same time of an energetic and progressive character, all the resources of the country were largely developed. The arts, agriculture, and science, all in their turn received from the monarch a decided and vigorous protection. It was during the reign of this ruler that a congress of the wisest men of the land, under the presidency of the most distinguished astronomer of those times, Huematzin, convened, and it was then that the great *Teomaxtli* or Divine Book was produced. The *Teomaxtli* came to be considered afterwards as the Bible of the Toltecs.

After a prosperous reign of fifty-two years the first monarch of the Toltecs abdicated the throne, according to law, in favor of *Ixtlilcuechahuac*, and retired into private life.

Ixtlilcuechahuac ascended the throne in 719. The reign of this monarch was attended by no remarkable event. Neither was that of his son *Huetzin*, who succeeded him.

After Huetzin the throne was occupied by 'Totepuuh, the fourth king. This monarch was an enthusiastic protector of the arts, and it was during

his distinguished reign that the most costly cotton fabrics and the most imposing works of Toltec architecture and ornamentation were produced. The cities were embellished with magnificent edifices, particularly that great mystic town *Teotihuacan*, which in the native Toltec tongue signifies *habitation of the gods*. It was in Teotihuacan where the great temples of *Tonatiuh Itzacual* (house of the sun) and *Meztli Itzacual* (house of the moon) were raised.

After *Naxacoc*, the next ruler, the government was entrusted to *Mitlzin*. The new king, rich in personal and social virtues, ascended the throne in 979 amidst the joyous manifestations of the people. Mitlzin, or Mitl, patriotic and possessed naturally of a spirit of progress, spared no pains in promoting the welfare of his country. He soon conquered the admiration and love of his fellowmen by stimulating with undying enthusiasm progress in all conditions of life and society. Thus, industry, the arts, agriculture and science, all and each received protection, but that kind of protection that can alone contribute to the greatness and happiness of nations. Mitlzin was certainly the greatest of the Toltec rulers. The monarch, imbued with religious ideas, and solicitous of the religion of his ancestors and of his people, promoted and carried into effect the erection of a new temple which, for its gorgeousness, grandeur and magnificence, should surpass the many other sanctuaries already in existence, especially at Teotihuacan. That temple was the great *Teocalli*, dedicated to the Frog, the goddess of water. It was also during his reign that a seminary was founded for the assemblage of the most eminent men in the arts, literature, science and philosophy.

His period being about to expire, the king prepared himself to receive his successor, but his most loyal caciques and the people in general, in recognition of the monarch's important services to the country at large, laid aside for the first time the prescription of the law, and the king was urged upon to continue at the head of the government. The acceptance of a second term was hailed with universal satisfaction. Mitlzin continued in power amidst the most enthusiastic manifestations of private and public rejoicings.

During seven years of his second term the monarch continued to give complete satisfaction in the management of the government, when death came to cut short a most worthy life, a life consecrated to the good of the country he loved so well and of the people by whom he was so beloved.

According to law women were exempt from occupying the throne as rulers of the nation. But the Toltecs, true to the memory of the defunct monarch, grateful for his distinguished services, and as an honor they desired to confer upon the faithful and intelligent wife that had so aided her husband in the discharge of his high duties, once more disregarded

the established statutes in order to entrust the government into the hands of *Xiuhltaltzin*. The lawful heir to the throne, *Tecpancaltzin*, not only consented to conform with the wishes of the people, but promised on his part the most submissive obedience as a dutiful son and a loyal subject. There being no dissension, the distinguished widow, in 1038, took charge of the government as the first Queen of the Toltecs. Her reign, which only lasted four years, owing to the premature death of the sovereign, was an era of peace and prosperity.

During the latter part of these periods of peaceful and progressive government, the imposing pyramid of *Cholula* was built. This *teocalli* (house of God) which was dedicated to *Quetzalcoatl*, the god of the air, was so far the greatest addition to the numerous works of art already in existence throughout the kingdom.

On the death of Queen *Xiuhltaltzin*, occurring in 1042, her son *Tecpancaltzin*, the rightful heir, was elevated to the throne. The new monarch followed closely the great path of progress and public good marked out by his worthy predecessors, and soon gave proofs of his ability as a ruler. But it was only during the first period of his eventful reign that the nation continued on its onward march of prosperity. Subsequent events, in which the failings, the weakness of the king, manifested themselves to a degree shocking alike to private and public morals, marked the beginning of the decline, final fall, and destruction of a great monarchy.

During the reign of *Tecpancaltzin* the beautiful legend of the discovery of *Pulque*, the Mexican national beverage, appears to have been invented. *Papantzin*, kindred to the king, had been able to extract from the *maguey* (*metl*) or century plant (*Agave americana*), a certain liquid said to have been identical with the one known at present as pulque. *Papantzin* communicated to his daughter *Xochitl* (flower) the secret, and both resolved to make the discovery known to the king. They did so, but *Tecpancaltzin*, more than with the new liquor, was taken with the surpassing beauty of the dark-eyed *Xochitl*. He became desperately and passionately enamored of the Indian maiden. Forgetting his high social position, his wife, his own dignity, and laying aside all scruples and moral principles, the monarch managed to abduct the innocent girl, and placed her in private apartments of the palace. *Xochitl*, in the course of time, intoxicated also with a strong love for the king, at last yielded to his entreaties, allowing herself to become the victim of a fiery and disastrous passion. As a result of these illicit relations there was born unto them a child. To it the name of *Meconetzin* was given, the word meaning "son of the *metl*," or maguey plant.

The queen consort soon afterward died of grief, overcome by the infidelity of her royal husband. As there was no legitimate heir to the

throne, Meconetzin, under the name of *Topiltzin*, became in 1094 the ninth and last ruler of the Toltec nation.

The assumption of the governmental power by *Topiltzin* was looked upon with disfavor, and this sad condition of affairs continued until all respect for the new king was entirely lost among the people. Add to this, the conduct observed by the monarch himself, whose laxity of morals was upheld and even honored by a few of his caciques and court sycophants.

The curly hair, presenting the form of a tiara, which had been noticed on the head of the infant Meconetzin at birth, was turning out to be, as it had been expected, of an evil omen.

In the course of time immorality and corruption invaded all conditions of life and all grades of society. While the king and many of his caciques and court flatterers were leading a life of shame and vice, totally regardless of government and the good of the people, these were preparing a just vengeance, alone to be found in rebellion and war.

Internal dissensions gave rise to invasions by neighboring tribes; to confusion, anarchy, and a series of terrible encounters, all this lasting for a period of three years. In one of the most bloody battles the monarch's old father *Tecpancaltzin* and his mother *Xochitl* lost their lives, and Meconetzin himself escaped through flight. The fate of the last of the Toltec kings was never known.

According to ALFREDO CHAVERO,* the high priest Huemac, leaving Tollan with his followers, wended his way towards *Xaltocan*. The march was a direct one from North to South, traversing *Coatliyanan*, *Mepocatlapan*, *Tepetlayacac*, and *Huehuecuauhtitlan*. From here the emigrants followed a course from East to West, over the northern part of the Valley of Mexico, and passed through *Nepopoalco*, *Temacpalco*, *Acatitlan*, *Tenamitliyacac*, *Atzacapotzalco*, and *Tetlilincan*, where *Cihuatlantonac* was then reigning, and in his care they left the two infirm old men, *Xochiolotzin* and *Coyotzin-Teotlicuacomalli*; then, taking a southern course and turning towards the east, after going through *Chapultepec*, they arrived at *Culhuacan*, and there the wanderers, having abandoned the theocratic form of government, elected *Nauhyotl* as their ruler. But in the year *chicome tochtli*, 1122, Huemac, seeing himself abandoned by all his people, the Toltecs, hung himself in *Chapultepec* at a place known as *Cincalco*.

Desolation and total devastation of the country was the final result of such disturbances and changes. A most terrible famine soon followed, which gave rise to an enormous loss of life. The populous nation was soon converted into a desolate cemetery.

Thus perished a great people; thus disappeared from the face of the

* *Mexico a Traves de los Siglos*, Tom. I, p. 384.

earth, after a prosperous reign of a little over four hundred years, the great Toltec nation, one of the most powerful and civilized monarchies that once inhabited the imposing regions of Anahuac.

A great people passed forever, it is true, but their civilization was the foundation of that of the other nations that followed and that were, with the Toltecs themselves, destined to excite the wonder and admiration of future generations all over the world.

The preceding paragraphs relating to the pilgrimage of the Toltecs are based chiefly on the writings of IXTLILXOCHITL.* The first history, however, that treats of the wanderings of the Toltecs and of the genealogy of the Toltec kings is that of TORQUEMADA.† Later writers, such as CLAVIGERO, VETANCOURT, and VEYTIA follow closely the works of IXTLILXOCHITL and TORQUEMADA.

CHAUVERO‡ in his recent excellent work, after examining very carefully all previous researches, takes issue with most of these, especially those of IXTLILXOCHITL. CHAUVERO says that, according to VEYTIA who followed the chronology presented by IXTLILXOCHITL, the Toltecs, after founding their city, established a monarchical form of government, electing *Chalchiuhtlanetzin* their first king, through the advice of Huemac. Chalchiuhtlanetzin was the son of *Icuauhtzin*, emperor of the *Chichimecs*. According to Toltec law, the reign of a monarch was limited to fifty-two years. Chalchiuhtlanetzin occupied the throne from 719 to 771, at the end of which term he died, and was succeeded by *Ixtlecuechahuac*. Then followed the son of this latter, *Huetzin*, who reigned until 875. Huetzin was succeeded by *Totepeuh*, who also ruled fifty-two years, that is, till the year 927. The fifth king was *Nacaxoc*, who reigned up to 979. Nacaxoc was followed by *Mitl*, who so distinguished himself in the management of public affairs that he was allowed to rule until his death, having reigned till the year 1035. His wife, *Xiuhlatzin*, was then made queen, but this sovereign was only four years in power, when she died, and the government was placed in the hands of her son *Tepepancaltzin*. After the fifty-two years' rule *Tepepancaltzin* was succeeded, in 1091, by his natural son *Topiltzin*, the last of the Toltec kings, the monarchy having come to an end in the year 1116.

CHAUVERO finds contradiction in these historical relations. Thus he says that TORQUEMADA took the names of *Tepepancaltzin* and *Topiltzin*, for one king only. The name of *Quechaocatlalinotzin* is given by that writer also to Chalchiuhtlanetzin; and *Ixtlecuechahuac* receives not less than five other different appellations, that is, *Izacatecatl*, *Tlaltocatl*, *Tlilquechahuac*, *Tlachinotzin*, and *Tlilquechaocatlalinotzin*. Mitl is known

**Relaciones historicas de la Nacion Tolteca*; also *Historia Chichimeca*.

†*Monarquia Indiana*.

‡*Loco Citat.*, p. 358.

likewise under the name of *Tlacomihua*. Queen Xiuhltatzin is sometimes also called *Xiuhquentzin*, and at others *Xiuhcaltzin*; and, in fact, TORQUEMADA took her for a king. The name of *Iztaccaltzin* is often given to Tecpancaltzin, and, finally, *Meconetzin* is the allegorical term applied to Topiltzin.

CHAUVERO, therefore, considers as false the chronology of IXTLILXOCHITL, and places more reliance in the historical data furnished by the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* (Annals of Cuauhtitlan). According to him these annals are authentic and of the highest importance. The original document was written in the Mexican language, between the years 1563 and 1569, according to AUBIN, or in 1570 according to RAMIREZ, the Mexican historian. These Annals were translated into Spanish by FAUSTINO GALICIA CHIMALPOPOCA, and are at present known as the *Codex Chimalpopoca*.

According to this history, the occupation of Tollan by the Toltecs took place in the year 674. Their first king was *Mixcoamazatzin*, who reigned from 700 to 765. The monarchs that followed were *Huetzin* and *Totepeuh*, the government of the latter lasting up to 887. The fourth king, *Ilhuitimaill*, occupied the throne till the year 925; and the fifth monarch, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl*, till 947. After this came the succession of the following kings: Sixth, *Matlaxochitl*, up to 982; seventh, *Nauhyotzin*, to 997; eighth, *Matlacoatzin*, up to 1025; ninth, *Tliccoatzin*, to 1046; tenth, *Huemac*, to 1048; and eleventh, the second *Quetzalcoatl*, and last of the Toltec rulers, up to 1116, in which year the city of Tula was destroyed and an end put to the Toltec dynasty.

The principal differences between the data furnished by the Annals of Cuauhtitlan and those given by IXTLILXOCHITL consist in that in the latter the governmental periods were chiefly conventional, that is, each one placed at fifty-two years; in the former instance they are spoken of as occurring in a natural order. Again, IXTLILXOCHITL refers to nine kings only; the Annals give the names of eleven distinct monarchs. The names of the rulers, common to both sources of information, are only four: *Huetzin*, *Totepeuh*, *Topiltzin*, and *Xochitl*. The latter, however, with a different attributive radicle in the Annals (*Matlaxochitl*?) is here spoken of as king.

Of the civilization of the Toltecs much can be said, but I will only mention for the present some of the most important points.

Society.—Three classes of society predominated among the Toltecs: The *Nobility*, the *Priesthood*, and the *Populace*; this latter included the artisans and hard-working people.

The priests represented the intellectual portion of society. They comprised the privileged class. They were the lawyers, the physicians, the scientists, the educational mentors, and, above all, the only holders of

the sacred offices, the interpreters of the divine word; the only ones, indeed, to intervene in and direct the practice of their peculiar religious rites. As among the nobility, there were among the priests certain distinctions of rank.

The priests passed most of their time within the temples, engaged in prayer. They usually went barefooted, with eyes cast down, showing in every way a condition of the greatest humility. They never married, but lived in absolute chastity. They usually wore white or black tunics, long enough to reach the ground; their heads were covered with white caps, and their hair, arranged in rolls artistically twisted, hung gracefully over their backs. The priests were wont to fast and do penance for a certain number of days at the beginning of the month and year. They spoke but little, and when not in religious meditation or in the discharge of sacred duties, they engaged themselves in the education of the youth, who were generally taught according to their social ranks.

Marriage bore, it may be said, a Christian character, and polygamy was severely punished.

Government.—As may have been observed, the form of the Toltec government was a hereditary and absolute monarchy. Each monarch, according to law, could only reign for a period of fifty-two years, which number comprised the Toltec century. If the sovereign survived the period allotted by law, he was obliged to deliver the government, at the expiration of his term, to his successor. If he died within the period, a member of the nobility was appointed to exercise provisional power for the rest of the term, when the rightful heir would assume the control of the government. The existence of this law of fifty-two years is denied by CHAVERO, based on the *Annals of Cuauhtitlan*.

Although the scepter was always wielded by the royal family, the priesthood exercised a powerful influence in the management of public affairs.

The king wore the most gorgeous costume. This consisted of a plain white or gray mantle, over which was placed the tunic, *xicalli*, bearing the most brilliant colors and adorned artistically with golden trimmings and precious stones. The collars, similarly arranged, completed the whole attire which, hanging gracefully to a little below the knee, is said to have been simply superb. The shoes, species of sandals, made of some woven cotton stuff, had soles of metal, this being generally pure gold.

The royal palaces were grand in every respect, and so spacious as to contain gardens for the cultivation of the numerous rare plants, and the keeping of the different kinds of animals. The Toltecs were great naturalists, and I may here state that many of the medicinal plants, properly

classified and used by them in the treatment of diseases, have come down to us and are yet employed as valuable drugs.

The monarch slept but little, and usually rose at an early hour. Meals were served to him twice a day only, at midday and at night. He spoke but little also, following the example of the priests, and did not allow himself to be seen except on great occasions, and especially when these bore a national character. Dead, he was buried with all royal magnificence in the corresponding *teocalli* or temple.

The king was the representative of the Supreme Being. Here we have, singularly enough, put into practice the principle of divine rights, a principle in existence among the most ancient theocracies the world over. According to the Toltecs, the kings were immortal, and when these died, they were transformed into gods or changed into the heavenly planets.

Agriculture.—Although the tilling of the land may have been practiced by previous races, the Toltecs seemed to have attained a high degree of perfection in agricultural procedures. They introduced the cultivation of maize and cotton especially, but they also raised many other useful plants, such as the different kinds of pepper, beans, tomatoes, and other vegetables. Certainly, agriculture constituted among the Toltecs one of the principal sources of the nation's wealth.

Arts and Manufactures.—In the practical arts and manufactures the Toltecs were quite proficient, especially in the preparation, through spinning and weaving, of cotton textures, in the dyeing of which they employed the most brilliant colors. The fabrics varied in kind, from the coarse linen to the finest cloths resembling damask, velvet, and even satin.

The different artisans, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, architects, and so forth, excelled in their respective trades, particularly the mozaic and feather manufacturers, whose exquisitely delicate workmanship remains unrivaled to the present time.

The Toltecs were familiar with the working of the metals and the cutting of gems and precious stones, and were well acquainted with the qualities and virtues of those products. This extensive knowledge is exhibited in the stone, silver, and gold ornaments used in their dresses and in the interior of their houses, palaces, and temples.

The Toltecs were great lovers of the fine arts, and although of a primitive nature, their architectural designs, exhibited in the constructed roads, cities, and monuments, evince a high order of taste and a high degree of civilization.

In Teotihuacan, which may be considered as the Jerusalem, the holy city of the Toltecs, were built by order of King Totepeuh the great temples of *Tonatiuh Itzacual* and *Meztli Itzacual*, already referred to, whose

colossal proportions gave them the character of two sentinels placed there to guard the security of the kingdom. The edifice consecrated to the Sun measured at its base about 250 yards in length and nearly 200 yards in width, having a height corresponding to these measurements. It contained a huge model-idol made of a very hard stone, and literally covered with gold. It represented the deified king of day. In a concavity, upon the breast, was placed an image representing the Sun and was made of the purest gold.

The temple dedicated to the Moon exhibited measurements a trifle smaller than those of its companion. It likewise contained a colossal statue, covered with gold, to represent the mythological queen of night.

Each building was composed of four great compartments, with as many stairways, made of polished stones, and within them were scattered here and there numerous statuettes, covered also with gold plates, representing various other minor deities. Around these temples small pyramids of about ten metres in height were constructed to represent the stars, according to their knowledge and their traditions. These pyramids, however, appear to have been used as tombs for the dead members of the nobility.

Religion.—The primitive religion of the Toltecs consisted in the adoration of the sun, the moon, and the stars. The fecundating force of the sun was personified by *Tonacatecuhtli*. To this god they made yearly offerings of flowers, fruits, and sometimes animals. It appears that they also entertained a religious veneration for fire. This primitive religion, born of their observations of the heavenly bodies, induced them to admit the existence of twelve heavens. Upon the highest of these heavens resided *Ometecuhtli* and *Omecihuatl*, man and wife, the rulers of the twelve heavens and of the earth. The Toltecs held, in their superstitious philosophy, that all things were subject to the great *Ometecuhtli*. This deism mixed with astrology was, however (due no doubt to the influence exercised by the conquered and other neighboring tribes), gradually transformed into a polytheism as we see it in the religions of later nations. The principal divinities of the Toltecs were these: *Tonacatecuhtli*, the Sun; *Tezcatlipoca*, the Moon; *Quetzalcoatl*, the Evening Star; *Tlaloc*, the God of Rain; *Chalchiuhtlicue*, the Goddess of Water; *Xiutecuhtlitletl*, the God of Fire; *Centeotl*, the Earth, and *Xochiquetzalli*, the Goddess of Love.

With regard to their religious rites, these were at first peaceful, and simply consisted in the assemblage of the people within the temples and at certain periods of time to do homage, under the direction of the priests, to the different deities. Afterwards, however, the Toltecs assumed the custom every year to sacrifice very young girls in honor of the god *Tlaloc*, or *Tlalocatecuhtli*. Their little hearts were taken out, offered to the god represented by a huge model, and their little bodies properly

buried afterwards. Again, at certain periods of the year, they would select the most notorious criminal, place him between two big stones, and thus crush him to death. This sacrifice, called *Tetlimonamiquian* (the crushing of the stones), was also performed in honor of the same god. Here we have, it may properly be said, the foundation of the human sacrifices so extensively practised by later tribes, especially by the Aztecs, or true Mexicans.

Science.—The Toltecs had a profound knowledge of astronomy and of hieroglyphics. They are said to be the people to have *first* arranged or measured time according to astronomical knowledge, that is, according to the movements of the planets. Their magnificent calendar is a monument of their science. They knew and classified the principal stars of the firmament, named them, studied their relations, and were almost thoroughly acquainted with their movements. But, like most of the ancient peoples, the Toltecs applied their astronomical knowledge to the formation, largely, of astrology to suit their religious and traditional ideas.

The Toltecs were the first to introduce into Anahuac hieroglyphical writing, whether they invented this themselves, or whether they acquired it from pre-existing races. Their language was the *Nahoa* or *Nahuatl*, which afterwards came to be known as the Mexican.

As a whole, the Toltecs were of a good moral character, little addicted to war, and great admirers of virtue; they detested lying and deceit. They were singers, musicians, and great dancers. In their private as well as their public festivities, wooden instruments and drums were abundantly used. They were devout, good orators, and great conversationalists; polite, courteous, and of attractive manners.

In their hieroglyphical writings they inscribed religiously their history, their customs, and manners; in fact, their whole system of civilization, a civilization of which I have endeavored to give a general idea.

In one word, agriculture, the arts, science, and all that evidence which afterwards served to throw distinction and lustre upon the subsequent inhabitants of the beautiful valley of Mexico, were due chiefly to the influence of the Toltecs. They were so noted in the different arts and in science that the name of Toltec, given to the distinguished of later nations, was held as a great honor. Their paintings and hieroglyphics are remarkable for the general knowledge they contain. Whosoever studies the history of these ancient people will find that they were a progressive and enlightened race, the founders of the subsequent civilizations of Anahuac. They were the first people to raise in that magnificent garden of this continent, Mexico, imposing monuments to be compared only to those of Egypt and India. The great ruins of Cholula and Teotihuacan

especially are immortal proofs of the existence of the first civilized nation of America.

It has been maintained by some, let me repeat, that the Mayas and the Maya-Quiches, the races peculiar to Yucatan and Chiapas, perhaps the most ancient of the American peoples, proceeded either directly or indirectly from Egypt and other Eastern nations; that the Mayas and the Maya-Quiches gave origin to the Toltecs, and that thus the series of other tribes came gradually into existence. But be this as it may, certain it is that the Mayas and the Maya-Quiches differed in many essential characteristics from the rest of the Anahuac nations. Other tribes may have existed during and even prior to the time of the Toltecs, but none have left the brilliant records of this great people.

Undoubtedly the Toltecs were the first race to disseminate over the virgin regions of the American continent the true germs of civilization. If nothing else, it was the first historical race, the representative of the most primitive nations of Mexico, the same race, in point of fact, that was met by the Spaniards under the great Aztec monarchy. But the Toltec, all in all, and embracing as it does the sum of all the knowledge found in the most ancient human history of the American continent—the Toltec, may be regarded as the *golden era* of ancient Mexican civilization.

